Protection of Southern Indian Peninsula

1986. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in a recent assessment, the Southern Indian Peninsula was found to be inadequately protected and needed more air bases both for offensive and defensive operations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any time bound programme has been chalked out to provide more air bases; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) and (b) Southern Air Command of the Indian Air Force and the Naval bases in the South have the requisite facilities, located strategically within the Southern Peninsula, to carry out all necessary operational tasks.

(c) and (d) Modernisation and further development of infrastructure are a continuous process.

Reduction in compulsory levy on Sugar

1987. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reduced the compulsory levy on sugar from 40 per cent to 15 per cent of its production and are committed to complete decontrol of sugar in a phased manner besides introducing its forward/future trading;

(b) in view of the fact that price of the sugar in the open market is soaring, whether Government are aware that the poor people can not afford to purchase sugar from the open market; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons for taking the aforesaid decisions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Government has decided

to decontrol sugar in a phased manner. Accordingly, the levy on sugar industry was reduced from 40 percent to 30 percent with effect from 01.01.2000 and subsequently to 15% with effect from 01.02.2001. Government has also decided to introduce futures/ forward trading in sugar.

(b) and (c) The wholesale prices of S-30 grade of sugar in the four principal markets of the country, namely, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai during the months of June and July 2001 ranged between Rs. 1400—Rs. 1620/- per quintal, while during the corresponding months of the previous year, they were in the range of Rs. 1370—1620 per quintal. Thus, the prices are more or less steady.

Extension of Antyodaya to more beneficiaries

1988. SHRI A. V1JAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to take any step to extend the Antyodaya' programmes to more beneficiaries under BPL;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the quantity of foodgrains distributed so far under the above said programme; and

(d) whether Government have announced any new scheme to increase the off-take through PDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Do not arise.

(c) Monthly allocation of 1,29,691 tonnes of foodgrains has been made so far to 17 States and UTs under Antyodaya Anna Yojana.

(d) In order to reduce excess stocks the Government has initiated the following measures under TPDS w.e.f. 12.7.2001:

(i) The BPL allocation of foodgrains has been increased from 20 kg. to 25 kg. per family per month w.e.f. July, 2001.